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Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SIG-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY
INFO HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SO, US, SOPN

SUBJECT: MILITARY SURVEY TEAM TO SOMALIA -- PRESS GUIDANCE

1. FOLLOWING FOR POSTS' INFORMATION AND USE IN RESPONDING TO ANY LOCAL QUERIES IS GUIDANCE FURNISHED TO DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN IN RESPONSE TO ARTICLE IN JULY 23 WASHINGTON POST BY DAVID OTTAWAY. OTTAWAY STORY, DATELINED KHARTOUM, ASSERTED THAT US HAS DECIDED TO DELAY SENDING SURVEY TEAM DUE TO ETHIOPIAN THREAT TO SEVER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IF US PROVIDES ARMS TO SOMALIA.

2. GUIDANCE:

Q. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA?
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A. WE ARE STILL DISCUSSING THIS QUESTION WITH THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, CONSISTENT WITH OUR OVERALL POLICIES ON ARMS TRANSFERS, WE CAN SAY THAT ANYTHING WE MIGHT EVENTUALLY DO IN THE AREA OF MILITARY SUPPLY TO SOMALIA WILL MEET ONLY LEGITIMATE DEFENSIVE NEEDS IN A WAY WHICH DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO INSTABILITY IN THE REGION.

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Q. IS THE US WITHHOLDING A MILITARY SURVEY TEAM FOR SOMALIA IN RESPONSE TO PROTESTS FROM ETHIOPIA?
A. WE HAVE KEPT THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT WELL INFORMED REGARDING OUR ACTIONS AND POLICIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, INCLUDING OUR INTENTION TO DO NOTHING THAT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO FURTHER INSTABILITY. WE ARE AWARE, OF COURSE, OF ETHIOPIAN OPPOSITION TO ANY POSSIBLE US ARMS SUPPLY TO SOMALIA. HOWEVER, OUR DECISIONS ON THIS SUBJECT ARE NOT DETERMINED BY THE VIEWS OF ANY OTHER PARTY, NO MATTER HOW STRONGLY THEY MAY BE ADVANCED, BUT ARE MADE BY THE US GOVERNMENT BASED ON OUR OWN JUDGMENT OF ALL THE FACTORS INVOLVED.

Q. IS SOMALIA AIDING THE INSURGENTS IN THE OGADEN?

A.

THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT HAS ASSURED US THAT ITS ARMY, WHICH WAS WITHDRAWN FROM THE OGADEN IN MARCH, HAS NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN THE SUBSEQUENT INCIDENTS THERE. THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT HAS FURTHER ASSURED US THAT SOMALIA IS NOT PROVIDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE INSURGENTS.

NEVERTHELESS, AT THE SAME TIME THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO VOCALLY DECLARE ITS SUPPORT FOR THE INSURGENT
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CAUSE AND THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN THE OGADEN HAS AGAIN INCREASED, LEADING TO ETHIOPIAN REPRISALS AGAINST SOMALIA AND THE RENEWED THREAT OF WIDER CONFLICT.

WE ARE MONITORING THIS SITUATION CLOSELY, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF ACTUAL SOMALI SUPPORT FOR THE INSURGENTS. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT MILITARY SUPPLY OR ASSISTANCE BY SOMALIA TO THE INSURGENTS WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE ASSURANCES GIVEN US THAT SOMALIA WOULD NOT USE FORCE AGAINST ITS NEIGHBORS.

THE UNITED STATES BELIEVES THAT THE UTMOST RESTRAINT IS CALLED FOR BY ALL THE PARTIES INVOLVED IN THIS SITUATION. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH AN ATMOSPHERE CAN BE CREATED IN WHICH THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY OF PROGRESS TOWARD A NEGOTIATED RESOLUTION OF THE UNDERLYING PROBLEMS OF THE AREA. VANCE

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